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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia's Legal Presence Law Takes Effect January 1

RICHMOND – Virginia's new legal presence law takes effect January 1, 2004. This law requires applicants for a driver's license or photo identification (ID) card to show proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence in the U.S.

The law requires customers applying for a photo ID card, learner's permit or driver's license to show:

- two proofs of identity
- proof of legal presence (effective January 1, 2004)
- proof of Virginia residency
- proof of social security number if they have one (not required when applying for a photo ID card)

Drivers who already hold a valid driver's license will not be required to prove legal presence when they renew. However, drivers with expired, suspended, revoked or cancelled licenses must prove legal presence when renewing or reinstating their driving privilege.

Legal presence may be proved using documents such as a U.S. birth certificate or a valid or expired U.S. passport. It also can be proved using a variety of other documents, such as a Certificate of Citizenship, Resident Alien Card or a valid foreign passport with a visa, I-94 or I-94W from a participating country.

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Complete lists of documents accepted for proof of identity, residency and social security number are available on the DMV web site at www.dmvNOW.com. A list of acceptable documents for proof of legal presence will be available on the DMV web site in the near future.

In the past, the sole purpose of a driver's license was to provide proof that a person had the knowledge and skills to safely operate a motor vehicle. Now, driver's licenses and ID cards are widely used to verify a person's identity and often are required for everything from opening a bank account to cashing a check.

DMV wants to ensure that the new legal presence law, passed by the 2003 General Assembly, is implemented equitably, fairly and in a cost-effective manner.

DMV is hiring additional employees to meet the demand for service in high-volume urban offices. The agency also has increased the number of hours part-time employees can work and anticipates authorizing overtime, as necessary.

All frontline employees will receive training on the new requirement. Managers and senior staff will receive additional training on recognizing documents acceptable for proof of legal presence and on spotting potentially fraudulent documents.

DMV customers can ensure the success of their driver's license or ID card transactions by arriving prepared. Customers should make sure that they have the correct documents necessary to prove identity, legal presence, Virginia residency, and social security number (if required). For more information, check DMV's web site or call the agency's toll-free number at 1-866-DMV-LINE.

Remember, anyone coming to DMV without the required documents will not receive a driver's license or ID card. The legal presence law clearly states the requirements that must be satisfied to obtain either document.

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